UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

GENERAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 22 September 1993
at 3.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. INSANALLY
(President of the General Assembly)

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/BUR/48/SR.2
12 October 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS: MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/BUR/48/1 and Add.1)

Section V. Allocation of items

Paragraph 46

1. The CHAIRMAN noted that, in paragraph 46, the Secretary-General informed the Committee that the allocation of items was based on the pattern adopted by the General Assembly for those items in previous years, with the exception of the items previously allocated to the former Special Political Committee and to the former Fourth Committee, which, in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 47/233, had been allocated to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 4 of its decision 34/401.

3. The CHAIRMAN noted that in paragraph 46, the Secretary-General drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 5 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/88 B, which recommended that the Chairmen of the Main Committees should take the initiative, in the light of past experience, to propose the grouping of similar or related items and the holding of a single general debate on them, and to paragraph 6 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 45/45, which recommended that the General Committee, in making recommendations as to how agenda items should be allocated to the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly, should ensure the best use of the expertise of the Committees.

Paragraph 47

4. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to 11 items and 1 sub-item of the draft agenda which had not been considered previously by the General Assembly. He invited the Committee to consider the recommendations it should make regarding the allocation of those items.

5. In connection with sub-item (b) of item 140, he noted that item 140 was customarily allocated to the Fifth Committee.

6. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that sub-item (b) of item 140 should be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsors of items 152 and 153 had proposed that those items should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

8. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that items 152 and 153 should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsor of item 154 had proposed that the item should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

10. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 154 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsors of item 155 had proposed that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

12. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 155 should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsor of item 156 had proposed that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Colombia had asked to participate in the discussion of item 156. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to his request.

15. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rey (Colombia) took a place at the Committee table.

16. Mr. REY (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in document A/48/146 the Secretary-General requested that the item entitled "United Nations interim offices" should be included as an additional item in the provisional agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and should be considered directly in plenary meeting. The Group of 77 and China, however, believed that the item should be considered by the Second Committee, as a sub-item of the item entitled "Operational activities for development". The question of interim offices had been considered on many occasions over the past two years, in the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Committee on Information and the Fifth Committee. The most recent legislative provision was decision 47/469, adopted by consensus, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that his proposals relating to the structure, functions and activities of the seven United Nations interim offices fully complied with the mandates of the relevant General Assembly resolutions pertaining to operational activities and dissemination of information, in particular resolutions 47/199 and 47/73, and decided that the report to be presented by the Secretary-General should be submitted also to the Second Committee for its consideration and recommendations. In the light of those considerations, and in view of the contents of the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/47/146/Add.1), the Group of 77 and China believed that the Second Committee was the appropriate body to deal with the matter, and that the item entitled "Operational activities for development" was the appropriate context for substantive consideration by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposals regarding interim offices.

17. Mr. SEVAN (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs) said that the item entitled "Operational activities for development" was concerned with operational activities of the United Nations system; UNDP; the United Nations Population Fund; the United Nations Children's Fund; and the World Food Programme. In paragraph (d) of decision 47/469, the General Assembly took note of the provisional and exceptional arrangements in place, undertaken

(Mr. Sevan)

by the Secretary-General, and stressed that they might continue until the General Assembly had taken a policy decision on the matter at its forty-eighth session.

18. The report by the Secretary-General (A/48/146/Add.1) had been prepared in response to the General Assembly's wish, expressed in decision 47/469, to take a policy decision on the question of interim offices at its forty-eighth session. The report was therefore a broad, policy-oriented document which described the Secretary-General's overall approach to interim offices and the role that they could play in developing a more unified United Nations presence at the country level. As had been recognized by the General Assembly during its consideration of the issue at its forty-seventh session, the question of interim offices touched on a number of issues which were considered each year in a number of the Main Committees. In those circumstances, the Secretary-General suggested that it would be appropriate for the General Assembly, early in the current session, to take a broad policy decision on the matter, in order to provide a basis for discussion of its more detailed aspects in the relevant Main Committees. It was for that reason that the Secretary-General had requested that his report should be considered directly in plenary.

19. In the Secretary-General's view, it would not be appropriate for the new item to be made a sub-item under "Operational activities for development" because the interim offices concept extended beyond operational activities for development. The aim was to enhance the coordination, in certain countries, of the whole range of United Nations activities, including operational activities for development and activities related to humanitarian assistance, public information, human rights, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, where such activities enjoyed the consent of the host Government and had been mandated by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other intergovernmental bodies. The Secretary-General therefore continued to believe that the new item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

20. Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) fully supported the views of the representative of Colombia, but suggested, as a compromise, that the item could perhaps be considered first in plenary meeting and later in the Second Committee.

21. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) and Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala) suggested that the Committee should defer a decision on the matter so as to allow the regional groups more time to consider its broader implications.

22. It was so decided.

23. Mr. REY (Colombia) withdrew.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsor of item 157, which was now a sub-item under item 109, had proposed that it should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

25. Mrs. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that her delegation had requested that item 157 be considered directly in plenary meeting for a number of reasons. The Head of State of Liechtenstein was closely involved with the item, having introduced it in his first statement to the General Assembly during the general

(Mrs. Fritsche, Liechtenstein)

debate in 1991 and having actively followed the relevant discussions since then. He had been present throughout the meeting of experts held in Liechtenstein in March 1993 and planned to say more on the subject when he addressed the General Assembly during the general debate at the current session. Moreover, he was prepared to attend the General Assembly at the current session for the debate on the item, and, as a Head of State, it would be appropriate for him to participate in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

26. The item raised some very important issues affecting both the future direction in which the principle of self-determination might develop and the mechanisms whereby armed conflict, particularly civil war, might be avoided. It was appropriate that those issues, which touched the heart of what the United Nations stood for, should first be debated in plenary meeting where the Members of the United Nations could, at an appropriate level, express their initial views on the value of the Liechtenstein initiative and the direction which further discussion might take.

27. Her delegation therefore suggested that the debate on the item should take place directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that action on the item could be taken in the Third Committee.

28. Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) said that, since the Committee had already decided to recommend that item 157 should be included in the agenda as a sub-item of item 109, the debate on it should take place in the Third Committee rather than in plenary meeting.

29. Mr. ROSENSTOCK (United States of America) pointed out that a similar issue had arisen at the forty-second session regarding a sub-item of an item which was to be allocated to the Sixth Committee and that the Committee had decided to recommend that the item should be allocated to the Sixth Committee on the understanding that the sub-item in question would be introduced at a plenary meeting. In the light of that precedent, he suggested that item 157 should be allocated to the Third Committee but should be introduced at a plenary meeting before being considered by that Committee.

30. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 157 should be introduced at a plenary meeting on the understanding that action on the item would be taken in the Third Committee.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsors of item 159 had proposed that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

32. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 159 should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsors of item 160 had proposed that the item should be allocated to the First Committee.

34. Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that, while he could agree that item 160 should be allocated to the First Committee, in view of the merger of the Special Political Committee and the Fourth Committee, he felt that it would be useful if either the Chairman of the General Committee or the Chairmen of the First Committee and

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) could hold consultations regarding the agendas of those two Main Committees with a view to achieving a balance in the number of items allocated to each.

35. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 160 should be allocated to the First Committee.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsors of items 161 and 162 had proposed that those items should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

37. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that items 161 and 162 should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the sponsor of item 165 had proposed that the item should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

39. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 165 should be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

Paragraph 48

40. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should adopt the proposals in paragraph 48 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, relating to item 12.

Paragraph 49

41. The Committee decided, with regard to item 18, to recommend to the General Assembly that all the chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to specific Territories should be referred to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), thus enabling the Assembly to deal in plenary meeting with the question of the implementation of the Declaration as a whole.

Paragraph 50

42. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that in paragraph 50, in connection with item 20 and item 115 (b), the Secretary-General referred to decision 47/429 regarding the award of human rights prizes in 1993.

43. The Committee decided to recommend that the award ceremony for the award of human rights prizes in 1993 should be held on Friday, 10 December 1993, on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Paragraph 51

44. The Committee decided to recommend that, in accordance with the procedure followed at previous sessions, item 38 should be considered directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that the representatives of the Organization of African Unity and of national liberation movements recognized by that organization would be permitted to participate in the discussion in plenary meeting, and that organizations and individuals having a special interest in the question would be permitted to be heard by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

Paragraph 52

45. The Committee decided to recommend that, as at previous sessions, the General Assembly should consider item 46 directly in plenary meeting, on the understanding that bodies and individuals having an interest in the question would be heard in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in conjunction with the consideration of the item in plenary meeting.

Paragraph 53

46. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that item 54 should be allocated at an appropriate time during the session.

Paragraph 54

47. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the paragraphs of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency dealing with the subject-matter of item 71 should be drawn to the attention of the First Committee in connection with its consideration of that item.

Paragraph 55

48. The Committee decided, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 16 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/125, to recommend that the annual report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on the operations, management and budget of the United Nations Development Fund for Women should be referred to the Second Committee for consideration under item 95 (Operational activities for development).

Paragraph 56

49. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 1 of resolution 47/99 of 16 December 1992, in which the General Assembly, inter alia, had decided to hold four plenary meetings, at a high level, at its forty-eighth session, to examine urgently the status of international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances.

50. The Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly that those plenary meetings should be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, 26 and 27 October 1993.

Paragraph 57

51. The Committee decided to recommend that item 127 should be allocated to the Fifth Committee, on the understanding that the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit dealing with subject-matters assigned to other Main Committees would be referred to those Committees.

Paragraph 54a (A/BUR/48/1/Add.1)

52. The Committee decided to recommend that the launching of the International Year of the Family should take place on Tuesday, 7 December, in the morning.

Paragraph 58

Items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting

53. The CHAIRMAN said that the representatives of Afghanistan, Belgium and Nicaragua had asked to participate in the discussion of the item. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to their requests.

54. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan), Mr. Brouhns (Belgium) and Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua) took places at the Committee table.

55. Mr. BROUHNS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that, while the Community welcomed the recent progress made in rationalizing the work of the General Assembly, it believed that further improvements were possible. For instance, the situation whereby draft resolutions on agenda items relating to international assistance were discussed both in the Second Committee and in plenary meeting was unsatisfactory. From the substantive point of view, questions relating to international assistance logically fell within the purview of the Second Committee; moreover, the consideration of such texts in plenary meeting made ad hoc negotiations necessary, and thus duplicated the work of the Second Committee. Lastly, the texts discussed and decided on in the Second Committee were, in any case, ultimately adopted in plenary meeting, at which time the delegations concerned could make whatever comments they might deem necessary.

56. Accordingly, the Community and its member States believed that all the items relating to international assistance - in particular, items 41 (relating to Afghanistan) and 45 (relating to Nicaragua), which had been proposed for consideration in plenary meeting - should be allocated to the Second Committee. The proposal by the representative of Afghanistan that the title of item 41 should be amended did not really affect the substance of the issue. While draft resolutions on such items obviously contained political elements, since they often dealt with conflict situations or their aftermath, their subject-matter remained essentially economic. Moreover, in the case of item 45, the political and security situation in Nicaragua would be covered by a draft resolution adopted under item 40.

57. Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan) said that, in the light of its first year of experience, his Government had concluded that the objective of economic reconstruction could be achieved only under satisfactory political and security circumstances. Accordingly, his Government believed that the item relating to international assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan should be considered in a forum in which all of its aspects could be discussed. His delegation would therefore be grateful if the European Community could accede to its request that the item be considered in plenary meeting. If, however, his delegation could be certain that the Second Committee would permit discussion of the political aspects of the draft resolution which his Government would eventually propose on the item, it would have no difficulty in accepting the European Community's proposal.

58. Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua) said that his delegation understood the concerns of the European Community with regard to the rationalization of the Assembly's agenda. However, the consolidation of peace in Nicaragua required a sustained commitment by the United Nations to provide all possible assistance for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the country, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 47/169. Attention must be given to such areas as the settlement of displaced and demobilized persons and refugees, land ownership and land tenure in rural areas, direct care for war victims, and mine clearance.

59. In view of the complex political context in which his Government was endeavouring to consolidate peace and lay the groundwork for democracy, it was easy to understand why his delegation wished the item to be considered in plenary meeting. His delegation would, however, be willing to reconsider its position in the future, if circumstances so permitted.

60. Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala) supported the Nicaraguan delegation's request.

61. Mr. WOOD (United Kingdom) said that the European Community's proposal was not intended to suggest that the items concerned were of less importance than those which were to be considered in plenary meeting; its purpose had simply been to rationalize the work of the General Assembly by having items which appeared to relate to similar subjects dealt with by the same Committee. Obviously, all the Main Committees, including the Second Committee, took account of all aspects of the items allocated to them, including any relevant political aspects. It was not appropriate for the General Committee to discuss the terms of an eventual draft resolution; that was a matter to be dealt with by delegations in the appropriate bodies and at the relevant time. He endorsed the comments made by the representative of Afghanistan, which had pointed the way towards a consensus on the proposal regarding the allocation of the items concerned to the Second Committee.

62. Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua) said that the action which could be expected to be called for in the future in the draft resolution to be adopted on item 45 did not normally fall within the purview of the Second Committee, and that the division of labour among the Main Committees of the General Assembly was one of the most important aspects of the rationalization of its work.

63. Mr. TAKHT-RAVANCHI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation shared the views expressed by the representative of Afghanistan, namely, that other matters besides economic issues must be discussed if the General Assembly was to deal with the situation in Afghanistan. His delegation therefore believed that item 41 should be considered in plenary meeting.

64. Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan) said that, while his delegation would prefer item 41 to be considered in plenary meeting, it would not stand in the way of a consensus on the question.

65. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the matter should be deferred pending informal consultations.

66. Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan), Mr. Brouhns (Belgium) and Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua) withdrew.

67. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration in plenary meeting, including items 152, 153, 155, 159, 161 and 162, excluding item 54 and bearing in mind its decision on item 157, should be allocated to the plenary Assembly, while it reserved a decision on items 41, 45 and 156.

Items proposed for consideration by the First Committee

68. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the First Committee, including item 160, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

69. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), taking into accounts its decision on the item entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India" and its decision on the item entitled "Question of East Timor", should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Second Committee

70. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Second Committee should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Third Committee

71. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Third Committee, bearing in mind its decision on item 157, should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Fifth Committee

72. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Fifth Committee, including item 140 (b), should be allocated to that Committee.

Items proposed for consideration by the Sixth Committee

73. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the items proposed for consideration by the Sixth Committee, including items 154 and 165, should be allocated to that Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.